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JOURNAL

OF

THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY.

ART. I.—*Vajra-chhediká*, the “*Kin Kong King*,” or *Diamond Sûtra*. Translated from the Chinese by the Rev. S. BEAL, Chaplain, R.N.

[Presented December, 1863].

True words (Dhárañi) to be used for cleansing the mouth previous to a perusal of this work.

Scou-li Scou-li	[Śrī Śrī.]
Ma-ha Scou-li	[Mahā Śrī.]
Scou-scou-li	[Sau Śrī.]
Sah-po-ho	[Svab.]

True words (Dhárañi) (fit for) the pure condition of Being.
Om! Iam!

Afterwards follow eight invocations to the different Vajras.

THIS work belongs to a class of Buddhist books called *Prajñá Páramitá*. It was translated first into the Chinese by Kumára-jíva (A.D. 405), who was brought into China from Thibet. “The King of Tsin had sent an army into that country with directions not to return without the Indian whose fame had spread amongst all the neighbouring nations. The former translations of Buddhist works were to a great extent erroneous. To produce them in a form more accurate and complete was the task undertaken by Kumára-jíva. More than eight hundred priests were called to assist him; and the king himself, an ardent disciple of the new faith, was present at the conference, holding the old copies in his hand as the work of correction proceeded. More than three hundred volumes were thus prepared.” (Edkins).

Most of these works were afterwards re-translated by Hiouen Thsang: his version, however, of the work we are now considering is not so commonly used in China as that by Kumára-jīva.

A translation of this Sūtra from the Mongolian has been published by M. Schmidt. I have not had an opportunity of comparing it with the Chinese.

The work is divided into thirty-two sections, each of which has a distinct title and subject of discussion.

Cap. I. relates the circumstances under which the religious assembly was convoked, and from that shows how the discussion arose.

Thus have I heard.¹ Upon a certain occasion Buddha was residing in the city (country) of Śrāvastī, occupying the garden which Gida,² the heir-apparent, had bestowed on the compassionate (Sudana).

Here, then, was Buddha, surrounded by all the multitude of the great Bhikshus (religious mendicants, the general title of Buddha's followers), 1250 in number. Then the world-honoured one, it being now the time of providing food, having put on his robe, and taken his alms-bowl, entered the great city of Śrāvastī, for the purpose of begging a supply.

Having gone in order through the midst of the city, begging food in a regular manner, he now returned to his former retreat, where, having eaten the food he had received as alms, and having laid aside his robe and alms-bowl, he washed his feet, and then, arranging his seat, he sat down.

Cap. II. contains the respectful request of the aged Subhūti.³

At this time the distinguished and venerable Subhūti sat in

¹ This is the well-known phrase, "evam mayā śrutam," concerning which Bournouf has a note (Lotus, p. 286). I will observe here that the phrase in question was probably introduced by the compilers of the Buddhist Sūtras in order to give these writings the same degree of sanctity which belongs to the Brāhmaṇas and Mantras, as forming the "Śruti," or Sacred Revelation of the followers of the Vedas.—*Vide* Max Müller, *Hist. of Sansc. Lit.*, p. 75.

² For a full account of this garden, *vide* S. Hardy, *M. of Bud.*, p. 218. [Hardy gives the name of the prince as "Jeta," and the garden is called "Jeta-vana." Bournouf *Int.* 22.—Ep.]

³ Subhūti is in Chinese "Virtuous presence."

the midst of the assembly. Then rising forthwith from his seat, he uncovered his right shoulder, and with his right knee knelt on the ground; then closing together the palms of his hands, and raising them in a respectful manner to Buddha, he spoke thus: Oh! much-desired! world-honoured one! Tathágata ever regards and illustriously protects all the Bodhisatwas! he ever rightly instructs them!

World-honoured one! if a virtuous disciple, male or female, aspire after (the attainment of) the “unsurpassed, just, and enlightened heart,”¹ say on what ought that disciple to fix his reliance, say how ought that disciple to repress and subdue the evil emotions of this sinful heart.²

Buddha said: Good! good! (sádhu). Subhúti! it is as you say. Tathágata is ever mindful of and illustriously defends all the Bodhisatwas, and he ever instructs them in right. You therefore listen now and examine well what, for your sake, I declare. The worthy disciple, whether male or female, who aspires after the attainment of the perfectly just, unsurpassed, and enlightened heart, ought to rely on what I shall now explain, ought to subdue the risings of his corrupt heart in the way I shall now exhibit!

Ah! yes, world-honoured one! would that you would so far gratify us all, anxious to hear.

Cap. III. exhibits the true distinctive character of the Great Vehicle.

Buddha said: Subhúti, all the Bodhisatwas and great Bodhisatwas ought thus to subdue and repress the risings of this corrupt heart. Whatever species of creature there be, whether oviparous or viviparous, born from spawn or by transformation, possessing a material form or not, liable to the laws of mind or not, not altogether possessed of mental organization nor yet entirely without it—all these I command and exhort to enter on the state of the unsurpassed Nirvána (Pari nirvána³) and for ever to free themselves from the conditions of being to which they severally belong. The great

¹ Anuttara samyak sambodhí hridaya.

² That is, the natural heart.

³ Vide Julien ii. 390.

family of sentient beings, immeasurable, vast, numberless, being thus freed from such states of existence, then indeed there will be no longer any such beings to arrive at this position of perfect freedom.

I conclude, therefore, Subhúti, if there be a Bodhisatwa affected with any selfish distinction, or any social distinction,¹ or any distinction as a sentient being, or any distinction as a finite and perishable being, then this Bodhisatwa is not one in reality.

Cap. IV.—The characteristic of the most perfect line of conduct, is, that it is spontaneous.

Moreover, Subhúti, a Bodhisatwa in the active discharge of his functions ought to be without any object of reliance or desire (i.e., unaffected by any secondary object in the discharge of his chief business). When occupied, for instance, in attending to the work of charity—his ought to be that charity which is called "unmixed with any material consideration"—he ought to distribute his alms without relying on (or, having any reference to) any sensible gratification, whether it be of sound, or odour, or taste, or touch, or thought.

Subhúti, a Bodhisatwa ought thus to discharge the work of almsgiving, relying on no sensible distinction whatever. What then! if a Bodhisatwa be thus charitable, having no reliance or reference, his consequent happiness must be immeasurable and boundless. Subhúti! what think you? Can the eastern region of space be measured by a line?

No, certainly, world-honoured one!

Subhúti, can the western, or southern, or northern regions of space be measured? or the four midway regions of space (i.e., N.E., S.E., S.W., N.W.), or the upper and lower regions: can either of these be accurately measured or defined?

¹ These four distinctions (lakṣaṇa) are constantly referred to in this Sūtra as the "four Canons," or "Rules." The idea seems to be this: if a man so destroy all marks of his individual character as to act without any reference to himself, or men, or other states of being, or continuance in the condition of a living creature, then he has arrived at the desired state of non-individuality, and must be lost in the ocean of Universal Life. This is the *Pari nirvāṇa*, the condition of absolute rest—the desired repose of the Buddhist disciple.

No, certainly, world-honoured one !

Subhúti, the consequent happiness of the Bodhisatwa, who discharges his charitable impulses in the distribution of alms without any reliance or secondary object whatever : his happiness, I say, is likewise boundless and immeasurable. Subhúti, a Bodhisatwa ought to rely on nothing whatever, except this principle of my doctrine.

Cap. V.—Regarding only the immaterial principle, we behold things in their true light.

Subhúti, what is your opinion ? Is it possible by any bodily distinction to behold Tathágata ?

No, certainly not ! world-honoured one ! it is not possible to obtain a view of Tathágata by the medium of any bodily distinction or quality whatever. What then ? That which Tathágata speaks of as a quality of the body, is after all a quality of that which is no real body (and therefore itself unreal).

Buddha said : Subhúti, all that which has qualities or distinctions, all this is empty and unreal ; but if a man beholds all these qualities as indeed no qualities, then he can at once behold Tathágata.

Cap. VI.—The precious character of true faith.

Subhúti now addressed Buddha thus : World-honoured one ! with reference to the mass of sentient beings who may hereafter be privileged to hear the words contained in the former sections : will these words produce in them a true faith ?

Buddha said : Subhúti, speak not after this manner. (For) after the Nirvána of Tathágata, though five hundred years be elapsed, should there be one who, by keeping the moral precepts, prepares himself for the happiness consequent on such conduct, that man no doubt by these former sections of my doctrine will be able to arrive at a true faith. Supposing such a man to have truly arrived at this condition, you should know that the seeds of virtue which have been sown in his mind were

implanted not by one Buddha, or even two or three, or four or five, but having these seeds of virtue sown within him by the teaching of countless thousands of Buddhas, and then hearing these sections, reflecting but a moment, the true faith dawns on his heart. Subhúti! Tathágata knows entirely, and entirely perceives, that all this mass of sentient beings shall obtain (in the manner I have described) immeasurable felicity. And why so? but because they will thus be freed from all selfish distinctions and worldly desires, and distinctions as perishable beings, and distinctions as finite beings; they will have no distinction either as beings possessed of mental organization, nor as beings without such an organization. What then? All this mass of sentient existences, if their heart be possessed of any such distinction, they immediately place their dependence on some object agreeable to this distinction; or, if they be possessed of any such mental distinction, what is this but coming under the same necessity? And more than this, if they take hold of the fact of their having no distinction as a mentally-constituted being, they then also bring themselves under the same necessity of dependence. So (it is the case that) we should neither rely on anything real or unreal (literally, on that which is a law or on that which is not a law). Tathágata has ever spoken thus: "Ye Bhikshus, know ye well that my law is as it were but a raft to help you across the stream. The law, then, must be forsaken; how much more that which is no law!"

Cap. VII.—The state of perfection cannot be said to be obtained, nor can it be described by words.

Subhúti, what think you? Has Tathágata obtained the condition of the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened heart? Or has Tathágata any law which can be put into words by which this state may be attained?

Subhúti answered and said: As I understand the system which Buddha is now explaining, there can be no fixed and unchangeable law (*i.e.*, condition), as that which is called the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened heart; and so there can be no fixed law which can be expressed in words by Tathágata.

Hence it seems that the various systems which have been explained by Tathāgata can none of them be comprehended within fixed limits, or dogmatically explained; they cannot be spoken of as, “not a system of law,” nor yet as the opposite of that which is “not a system.”

So it appears that all the sages and wise men who have lived, have all adopted this mode of diffusive doctrine [doctrine which admits of no particular distinction (wou-wei)], and hence the differences which have occurred.

Cap. VIII.—All former systems whatever have sprung from this.

Subhūti! what think you, if there was a man who distributed in alms sufficient of the seven precious substances to fill the whole of the great chiliocosm, would his merit and consequent reward be considerable or not?

Subhūti said: Very considerable indeed, world-honoured one! But why so? this merit being in its very character of the nature of that which is no merit at all, so Tathāgata speaks of it as being “much.”

(Buddha resumed): If there be a man who receives and adopts the principles of this Sūtra up to the point of the four sections,¹ I say on that man's behalf, that his merit is much greater than the other's. What then, Subhūti? all the Buddhas, and all the perfect laws of the Buddhas, have sprung from (the principles of) this one Sūtra; but, Subhūti, that which is spoken of as the law of Buddha, is after all not such a law (or, is a law of no-Buddha).

Cap. IX.—The only true distinction is that which is not to be distinguished.

Subhūti, what think you? is the Śrotāpatti able to reflect thus with himself: “I shall now obtain the fruit of having entered this first path of a Śrotāpatti?”

Subhūti said: No, world-honoured one! And why? this word Śrotāpatti is a mere phrase, which signifies “once entered the stream,” and after all there is nothing to enter; for

¹ That is, the four rules of non-individuality.—*Vide ante*, cap. iii.

he cannot enter on that which comes under the category of form, or sound, or odour, or taste, or touch, or thought. This term, then, Śrotāpatti, is a mere word, and no more.

Subhūti, what think you? is the Sakṛid-āgāmī able to reflect thus with himself: "I shall now obtain the fruit of having entered on this second path of a Sakṛid-āgāmī?"

Subhūti replied: No, world-honoured one! And why? this word Sakṛid-āgāmī signifies "one more return to life," and there is in truth no going or returning. This term, then, is but a mere name, and no more.

Subhūti, what do you think? is the Anāgāmī able to reflect thus with himself: "I shall now obtain the reward of having entered the third path of an Anāgāmī?"

No, certainly not! Subhūti said; for why? world-honoured one! this term Anāgāmī is but a word signifying "no further return," and there is not in truth such a thing as "not returning." This word, therefore, of Anāgāmī, is but a mere name, and nothing more.

Subhūti! what think you? can an Arhat reflect thus with himself: "I shall now obtain the condition of a Rahat?"

Subhūti said: No, world-honoured one! And why? Because there being no longer any active principle which can affect the Rahat, this name of Rahat is now only an empty word. World-honoured one! if a Rahat were to indulge this thought, "I shall now obtain the position of a Rahat;" then he would immediately subject himself to one of the four distinctive characters of individuality (and be no longer a Rahat). World-honoured one! when Buddha declared that I should attain the power of Samādhi,¹ which is opposed to all bitterness, and is accounted the most excellent attainment, and corresponds to the most exalted position of a Rahat, world-honoured one, I did not then reflect that I should obtain this eminent condition. World-honoured one! if I had so reflected "that now I shall attain the position of a Rahat," the world-honoured one would not then have said, "Subhūti, what is this but the name of the one who

¹ The latter portion of this cap. is very obscure. I offer this translation with diffidence.—S. B.

delights in the mortification of an Aranyaka (forest devotee)," regarding "Subhúti" as in truth not acting at all, but as a mere name, then (in such forgetfulness of self) "he is one who delights in self-mortification."

Cap. X.—Complete perfection lies in the heart purified and enlightened.

Buddha addressed Subhúti thus: How think you, when Tathágata in old times was present at his nomination by Dípankara Buddha; had he then, by means of any active exertion, attained ought towards this distinction? No! world-honoured one! when Tathágata lived in the time of Dípankara Buddha, and was present at the transaction referred to, he had attained nothing by any mere ritual observance. Subhúti, what think you? are the various lands and territories of the Buddhas completely perfected by the Bodhisatwas who occupy them? No! world-honoured one! for this complete perfection of which we speak is after all no perfection at all, it is only an empty name.

So, Subhúti, all the Bodhisatwas and great Bodhisatwas ought to strive after the possession of a heart perfectly pure and spotless, and not after any material or sensible adornment; or a heart depending on such adornment; whether it be of sound, or odour, or taste, or touch, or thought, they ought to have no such dependence as this, and being without reliance, to make their dependence on the fact of their being so. Subhúti! suppose for instance there was a man whose body was as large as the Royal Summeru. What do you suppose—would such a body be a large one or not?

Subhúti replied: Very great indeed, world-honoured one! But what then? Buddha is speaking of that body which is the opposite to the material body, that, indeed, may well be named Great.

Cap. XI.—The inestimable excellence of complete inaction (or complete indifference in action).

Subhúti, suppose there were as many Rivers Ganges as

the sands of the Ganges, would the sands of all these rivers be numerous or not?

Subhúti said: Very numerous indeed, world-honoured one! Even the rivers themselves would be numberless, how much more the sands of all these rivers?

Subhúti, I now say to you: Verily if there be a disciple, male or female, who were to distribute in alms as much of the seven precious substances as would fill as many great chiliocosms as there are sands in all the rivers above described, would his merit be great or not?

Subhuti said: Very great, world-honoured one!

Buddha replied: And yet if there were a disciple, male or female, who in the perusal of this Sútra advanced so far as to accept and appropriate the four canons (laid down in the former chapter), I declare on his behalf that his merit and happiness in consequence, would far exceed that of the former disciple.

Cap. XII.—The honour and respect due to the true doctrine.

Moreover, Subhúti, in repeating this Sútra in due order, and having come to the part in which the four canons are laid down, you should know that at this point the whole body of Devas, men and asuras, ought with one accord to bring their tribute of worship, as to a temple or Stúpa. How much more then if there be a man who is able completely to believe and receive the whole Sútra and to recite it throughout. Subhúti, know that this man has acquired knowledge of the most excellent and desirable of all laws; and if the place where this Sutra is recited be worthy of all honour as the place of Buddha himself, so also is this disciple honourable and worthy of the highest respect.

Cap. XIII.—Relating to the character in which this system should be received by men.

At this time Subhúti addressed Buddha, and said, World-honoured one, by what name ought we to accept and adopt this Sútra?

Buddha replied, The name of this Sútra is "Kin-kong

Poh-yo po-lo-mih" (Vajra-chhediká párami); by these words you ought to receive and adopt it.

But what then, Subhúti? Buddha declares that this "Kin-kong Poh-yo po-lo-mih" is after all not any such thing; that this title is a mere name.

Subhúti, how do you suppose? Has Tathágata any law which can be included in so many words?

Subhúti answered Buddha: World-honoured one, Tathágata has no such law.

Subhúti, what think you? as many minute particles of dust as there are in the great chiliocosm, are there many or not?

Subhúti answered, Very many, world-honoured one!

Subhúti, all these countless particles of dust Tathágata declares are no real particles; it is but an empty name by which they are known. Tathágata declares that all these systems of worlds composing the great chiliocosm are no real worlds; they are but empty names.

Subhúti, what think you? is it possible by regarding the thirty-two distinguishing marks to behold Tathágata?

No, world-honoured one! it is not possible to behold Tathágata by means of the thirty-two distinguishing marks.

For why? Tathágata declares that these thirty-two distinguishing marks are no real distinctions after all, that they are but mere names.

Subhúti, if there be a virtuous disciple, male or female, who should offer body and life in a work of charity, as many times as there are sands in the Ganges; and if, on the other hand, there be a man who receives and adopts the principles of this Súra up to the point of the four canons; on account of this man, I declare his merit is very great, and in point of number vast indeed.

Cap. XIV.—Removing all distinctive qualities, eternal rest and freedom is obtained.

At this time Subhúti hearing this doctrine thus delivered, earnestly desiring a complete explanation of the system, deeply moved even to tears, addressed Buddha thus: Oh! thou much-desired, world-honoured one! the deep mysterious

doctrine which Buddha has now delivered, I, from days of old, when I first obtained the eyes of wisdom, have never yet heard equalled. World-honoured one ! if we suppose a person to have heard this system, and with a believing heart, pure and calm, to have received it, then in that man is produced the true distinction, and we may then know that he has obtained merit, unequalled in character, to be desired above all things. (But) world-honoured one ! this true distinction of which I spoke is after all no real distinction, and even of this Buddha declares that it is a mere name. World-honoured one ! I having now heard the doctrine thus explained, understanding and believing the interpretation of it thus, accept and adopt it. I halt not at any difficulties ; but if in future years, after the lapse of five centuries or more, all these countless sentient creatures having likewise heard this Sūtra, and believing its interpretation, accept and adopt it, these men likewise shall attain the unequalled and much to be desired condition (of merit before alluded to). And why so ? but because these men are affected by neither of the four distinctive qualities, whether of self, or men, or worldly desire, or long life ; but from this it follows that this very distinction of self is the same as no distinction, and so with the rest also, they are unreal, and not to be considered except as names. So that a man, getting rid of all such distinctions, arrives at the condition of what is called "the state of all the Buddhas."

Buddha replied : Subhūti, you are right, you are right !

But if again there be a man who hears this system of doctrine, and be neither affected by pride, or fear, or bewilderment, this man also, be it known, has attained the much desired condition before alluded to. What then, Subhūti ? Tathāgata declares that the first Pāramitā (of charity) is no real Pāramitā ; this also is a mere name. And as to the Pāramitā of Patience, Tathāgata declares that this also is no Pāramitā ; it is but an empty name. What then, Subhūti ? in old time, when I was King of Koli, and my body was cut up and mutilated (or when my body was mutilated by the King of Koli), I at that time was without either of these

four distinctive qualities of individuality ; and again, when I, in old time, was cut up piece by piece, limb by limb, if I then had possessed either of these four distinctive qualities, then surely I should have experienced some degree of anger or resentment. Subhúti, again when, in old time, five hundred generations since, I was the Rishi Kshánti (or a Rishi practising the Kshánti Páramitá), at that time I was not subject to either of these before-named distinctive qualities. Know this therefore, Subhúti, a Bodhisatwa ought to get rid of all these individual distinctions, and in aspiring after the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened heart, he ought to rely on no earth-born principle, he ought to rely on no disposition founded on either sound or odour or taste or touch or thought, he ought to depend only on having no dependence, for if the heart once learns to depend, then it has no real strength. Hence Buddha declares that the mind of the Bodhisatwa ought not to rely on any formal act of charity. Subhúti, the Bodhisatwa ought to distribute his almsgiving for the purpose of benefitting the whole mass of sentient creatures, and yet Tathágata declares that as all dependencies are after all no real subjects of dependence, so also he says that all sentient creatures are not in reality what they are called.

Subhúti, Tathágata's words are true words, real words, literal words, not wild or contradictory ones. Subhúti, the condition of Being to which Tathágata has attained, this condition is neither really capable of description, nor yet is it wholly unreal. Subhúti, if the heart of a Bodhisatwa rely upon any condition or active principle whatever in the discharge of his charitable labors, he is like a man entering into a dark place in which nothing can be seen, but if a Bodhisatwa do not rely on any active purpose whatever in the distribution of his alms, he is like a man with his eyes open, and the brightness of the sun around him, he sees clearly every form and every object. Subhúti, in future ages, if there be a disciple male or female, who is able to read through the whole, and accept and adopt the whole of this Sútra, he is then the same as Tathágata himself. Buddha, by his supreme wisdom, clearly knows and clearly sees that

this man, arrived thus at complete perfection, derives boundless and immeasurable merit.

Cap. XV.—The redundant merit derived from an adoption of this system of doctrine.

Subhúti, if there be a disciple, male or female, who during the three portions of the day deliver in charity as many lives as there are sands in the Ganges, and proceed thus through a space of an asankhya of kalpas, ever offering up his life and body in alms, and if on the other hand there were a man who on hearing this system of doctrine, receives it into a believing heart, without any doubt or reservation, the happiness of this man is far superior to that of the other, how much rather if he receive and adopt this written doctrine, read and study it and expound it to man.

Subhúti, it is indeed the case that this Súra contains a method which cannot be completely fathomed, it cannot be compared to anything which has been hitherto spoken, its distinguishing merit is without bounds. Tathágata, on behalf of those aspiring to the Great Vehicle, and those affecting the Highest Vehicle, says, if there be a man who is able to receive and adopt this Súra and repeat it throughout and declare it generally amongst men, Tathágata clearly sees, clearly knows, all these having arrived at perfection shall attain merit without bounds, incomparable, not to be fathomed. Thus it is, all men being one with Ho-Tan (Gautama?), Tathágata, arrive at the state of the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened (heart). Moreover if a man delights in an inferior system (the Little Vehicle), relying on one of the four individual distinctions, he cannot receive and adopt, or study or proclaim this Súra.

Subhúti, wherever it be that this Súra [is thus read and proclaimed], all men, Devas and Asuras ought to bring their offerings, ought to apprehend that such a spot is as sacred as that where a Stúpa is erected, all ought to worship here with respect, to bring their flowers and incense, to scatter them around this locality.

Cap. XVI.—Being once pure, all the power of Karma¹ is past.

Moreover, Subhúti, if there be a disciple, male or female, who having received and adopted this Súra reads it throughout, if on account of his evil Karma produced by his sins in former births, he be now born as a man of poor degree and unhappy circumstances, or having entered one of the three evil degrees of birth, he be now born poor and miserable as a man, all the evil Karma resulting from his former sins, shall now be for ever destroyed, and he himself be enabled to attain to the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened heart.

Subhúti, I remember countless ages ago, before Dípankara Buddha having met with infinite myriads of Buddhas, who were all engaged in performing the external duties of religious service, deceived by the belief of the reality of things around them; but if there be a man, who in after ages is able to accept and recite this Súra throughout, the merit which he will thus attain to, shall infinitely exceed that which formal attention to religious observances will secure, so much so that to draw any proportion between them would be impossible, and incredible were it to be stated; for as the method and entire meaning of this Súra is not to be described or entirely conceived, so the merit and happy consequences of accepting it, cannot be conceived or described.

Cap. XVII.—Having arrived at the perfection of wisdom, there is no individuality left.

At this time Subhúti addressed Buddha thus: World-honoured one, if a disciple, male or female, aspire after the attainment of the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened heart, say, on what ought that disciple to ground his reliance; by what means ought he to destroy and suppress *this* evil heart?

Buddha replied: Subhúti, if a disciple, male or female, aspire after the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened heart, he ought to beget in himself this disposition [and say], “I must now destroy and get rid of all the principles of life in whatever creature they exist, all creatures being, as far as I am

¹ I adopt the word “Karma” from Spence Hardy; the Chinese (*nich*) has a similar meaning.

concerned, thus destroyed and got rid of; then, in truth, there will be no longer any such thing as getting rid of all such creatures." So then, Subhúti, if a Bodhisatwa still be affected by any individual distinction, such as the following: I will strive after so and so because "it seems agreeable to me," or because "men approve of it," or because "it is the best reward for a sentient creature," or because "it entails endless duration of life," such a Bodhisatwa, I say, is not a true Bodhisatwa, wherefore it is plain, O Subhúti, that there is in reality no such condition of being as that described as the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened heart.

Subhúti, what think you? did Tathágata possess one fixed law of action when he attained in the days of Dípankara Buddha the condition of the unsurpassed heart?

No! world-honoured one! as I at least interpret the doctrine of Buddha, then Buddha had no fixed rule of action when in the days of Dípankara Buddha he attained the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened heart.

Buddha said: Right! Right! Subhúti, there is in truth no fixed law [by which] Tathágata attained this condition. Subhúti, if there had been such a law then, Dípankara Buddha would not have said in delivering the prediction concerning me, "You in after ages must attain to the state of Buddha, and your name shall be Sákyamuni," so that because there is indeed no fixed law for attaining the condition of "the perfect heart," on that account it was Dípankara Buddha delivered his prediction in such words. What, then, the very word "Tathágata" is the explanation as it were of all systems of law. If a man say, "Tathágata has arrived at the condition of the perfect heart," [and hence conclude that there is a fixed method by which he has so arrived, this is erroneous] Subhúti, in truth there is no such fixed law. The condition of the unsurpassed heart to which Tathágata has arrived, is thus a medial one, neither wholly real nor wholly false, hence Tathágata declares that all things¹ are but con-

¹ The Chinese expression "Yih tsai fah," (in the text) corresponds to "Yé dhammá" in the well known Gáthá,—

"Yé dhammá hétuppabhavá," etc.

vide Spence Hardy's Manual of Buddhism, p. 196, and Jour. R.A.S., vol. xvi. p. 37.

ditions of being existing in Buddha himself. Subhúti, what men call "all things," is in fact just the contrary (*i.e.* no-things); such things are only mere names. Subhúti, it is as though there were a man with a very great body. Subhúti said: "World-honoured one! Tathágata speaks of a man's body as great, but this idea of greatness is but a mere name, it is just the opposite of a reality." Subhúti, so it is with the Bodhisatwa, if he should say "I ought to destroy all recollection of the countless kinds of creatures," this Bodhisatwa would not be really one, but only a nominal one. What then, Subhúti, there is in reality no fixed condition of being, and when this is the case, then a man is really a Bodhisatwa. Hence Buddha says that all things ought to be without any individual distinction. Subhúti, if a Bodhisatwa should say thus, "I ought to adorn the land of Buddha" (*i.e.* I ought to practise all the Pâramitás and other meritorious observances, in order thoroughly to exhibit in myself the excellences of a Bodhisatwa), this Bodhisatwa ought not to be called one. For Buddha declared that this adornment is after all not any adornment, it is a mere name. Subhúti, if a Bodhisatwa completely gets rid of the idea of individuality, then this Bodhisatwa is one in reality and truth.

Cap. XVIII.—When all things are brought to their one true state of being, then there can only be one method of knowledge.

Subhúti, what think you? does Tathágata possess human power of sight?

Yes, certainly, world-honoured one! Tathágata possesses this power.

Subhúti, what think you? has Tathágata the power of sight peculiar to Devas?

Yes, certainly, world-honoured one! Tathágata possesses this power.

Subhúti, what think you? does Tathágata possess the eyes of wisdom?

Yes, certainly, world-honoured one! Tathágata possesses this power.

Subhúti, what think you? does Tathágata possess the eyes of the law?

Yes, certainly, world-honoured one! Tathágata possesses this power.

Subhúti, what think you? does Tathágata possess the eyes of Buddha?

Yes, certainly, world-honoured one! Tathágata possesses this power.

Subhúti, what think you? as many sands as there are in the Ganges can Buddha declare (the number of these sands) (or, does Buddha say that these are [real] sands)?

Yes, world-honoured one! Tathágata declares [the number of] these sands.

Subhúti, what think you? if there were as many rivers Ganges as there are sands in the Ganges, would the sands of all these rivers be considerable or not? and if there were as many chiliocosms as there are sands, would these be numerous?

Very numerous indeed, world-honoured one!

Buddha said: As many sentient creatures as there are in all these numerous worlds; if there were as many different dispositions (or hearts) as there are creatures, Tathágata nevertheless distinctly knows them all, and he says that all these different dispositions are after all none at all in reality, and that they are mere names.

Wherefore, Subhúti, the various dispositions that have existed in relation with things past, present, or future, are all unsubstantial and unreal.

Cap. XIX. treats of the universal diffusion¹ of the mystical body [of Tathágata.]

Subhúti, what think you? if there were a man who in the practice of his charity were to bestow in alms enough of the seven precious substances to fill the great chiliocosm, would the merit which this man obtained by the consequent influences of such charity be great or not?

¹ *Dharmadhātu*, i.e. "universally diffused essence," called *dharma*.

Yes, certainly, world-honoured one! the effect of such charity would be very considerable in its consequent merit.

Subhúti, if that merit and happiness consequent on it, were real merit and happiness, then Tathágata would not describe it as being "great:" it is when the happiness is in reality vain and transitory that Buddha speaks of it comparatively as "much" or "great."

Cap. XX.—On the removal of all material forms and all distinctive qualities.

Subhúti, what think you? Is it possible to behold Buddha through the outward distinctions of his perfectly fashioned body? No, world-honoured one! Tathágata is not to be seen through the medium of any such distinctions as these. And why? Tathágata declares that all such distinctions are after all no real distinctions; this term perfectly-fashioned-body, is nothing more than a mere name.

Subhúti, what think you? is it possible to behold Tathágata in any of the various changes which his body may be made to undergo (*i.e.* his spiritual transformations)?

No, world-honoured one! Juloi must not thus be sought for. What then—Tathágata declares that all these various changes and appearances are after all unreal—by whatever terms they are known they are but mere names.

Cap. XXI.—On the impossibility of expressing this system in words, that which can be so expressed is not agreeable to this body of doctrine.

Subhúti, be mindful not to speak after this manner, "Tathágata has this intention in his heart, viz., 'I ought to have a definitely declared system of doctrine,'" never think thus. For why, if a man say that Tathágata has a definitely spoken system of doctrine, that man does but malign Buddha, for the law which I give cannot be explained in words. Subhúti, as to a definitely declared system of law, that which can be thus declared is no law, it is but an empty name.

At this time the aged sage Subhúti addressed Buddha thus: World-honoured one! will the mass of sentient beings who

in future years may listen to this law, will they hereby have begotten in them a believing heart? Buddha said: Subhúti, that mass of sentient beings, of which you speak, in one sense is real, and in another is unreal. But what then, Subhuti? the mass of sentient beings, born of sentient beings, Tathágata declares are no such beings at all; the term "sentient beings" is but a name.

Cap. XXII.—It is wrong also to say that this system or condition of being can be attained to.

Subhúti addressed Buddha thus: World-honoured one! Buddha having arrived at the condition of the unsurpassed and perfect heart, is he in the condition which has previously been described as "not to be attained?"

Buddha said: True, True, Subhúti! I, as possessed of this heart, have come into the condition above described. This term the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened heart, is but a mere name.

Cap. XXIII.—The heart purified leads to virtuous practice.

Moreover, Subhúti, this condition of being of which I speak is one and uniform. There is no such thing as high or low in it. This condition which is named the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened (heart), consists in nothing more than the exclusion of all individual distinctions. A man who practises all the rules of virtuous conduct will forthwith attain this condition. But, Subhúti, when we speak of rules of virtuous conduct, Tathágata declares that these rules are after all no real and lasting rules; the term is but a mere name.

Cap. XXIV.—On the incomparable character of the happiness consequent on this wisdom.

Subhúti, if all the royal Sumerus in the great chiliocosm were gathered together, and a man were to distribute in charity an amount of the seven precious substances equal to this accumulated mass, and if another man were to accept and adopt this Prajná-páramitá Súra, up to the point of the four canons, and read and recite it, on account of that man,

I declare that his happiness and consequent merit would be incomparably greater than that of the other, so much so, that no number could express the excess of one over the other.

Cap. XXV.—The non-reality of transformational differences.

Subhúti, what think you? say not any of you that Tathágata thinks thus within himself, "I must deliver all these sentient creatures?" Subhúti, think not thus; and why? because in truth there are no such sentient beings for Tathágata to deliver; if there were, then Tathágata would immediately be subject to one of the *individual distinctions*.¹ Subhúti, Tathágata in speaking of the *first distinction of personality*,² declares that the term "I" is the same as that which is not "I," all other sects indeed believe in the reality of such personality. But, Subhúti, this expression "all other sects" Tathágata declares likewise to be a mere name, it is the same as that which is the opposite of this term (*i.e.* the name is nothing).³

Cap. XXVI.—The mystical body without any distinct characteristic.

Subhúti, what think you? is it possible to contemplate Tathágata through the thirty-two "distinctive signs,"⁴ which adorn his person? Subhúti said: Yes! Yes! Tathágata is manifested through the thirty two distinctive signs. Buddha said: Subhúti, if Tathágata is to be seen through the medium of these signs, then every Chakrawarttí is the same as Tathágata.

Subhúti addressed Buddha: World-honoured one! as I understand the doctrine which Buddha declares, Tathágata cannot be seen through the thirty-two distinctive signs. At this time the world-honoured one delivered the following Gáthá, "He who looks for me through any material form, or seeks me through any audible sound, that man has entered on a wrong course, he shall not be able to see Tathágata."

¹ Namely, the four distinctions constantly alluded to and explained in cap. iii.

² The first distinction, viz., the mark or distinction by which a man is known or speaks of himself as an individual (*Ego-ishness*).

³ This chapter is obscure, it is one of pure negation.

⁴ *Lakṣhaṇa*.

Cap. XXVII.—But there is a period when it would be incorrect to say that all laws and conditions of being must be disregarded and expunged.

Subhúti, if you should think thus, "Tathágata, by means of his personal distinctions has attained to the unsurpassable condition," you would be wrong, Subhúti. Tathágata has not arrived at this state by means of any such distinctions. But, Subhúti, do not come to such an opinion as this, viz., "that what is called the unsurpassed, just, and enlightened heart is nothing more than the mere neglect and destruction of all rules and conditions." Think not so, for why? the exhibition of this perfect and unsurpassed heart is not the consequence of having disregarded and destroyed all rules, in the active discharge of duty.

Cap. XXVIII.—On not receiving and not coveting the reward of virtuous conduct.

Subhúti, if a Bodhisatwa use in charity as much of the seven precious substances as would fill sakwalas as numerous as the sands of the Gauges; and if another man clearly understand the non-individual character of all conditions of being, and by patient endurance obtain perfection, the meritorious happiness of this Bodhisatwa exceeds that of the former. What then Subhúti, as far as all the Bodhisatwas are concerned there can be no such thing as the appreciation of reward.

Subhúti asked Buddha: "World-honoured one! what is this you say, that Bodhisatwas cannot be said to appreciate reward?"

Subhúti, the reward which a Bodhisatwa enjoys ought to be connected with no covetous desire; this is what I mean by non-appreciation of reward.

Cap. XXIX.—The dignity appertaining to complete rest and composure (Nirvāṇa).

Subhúti, if there be a man who speaks of Tathágata as coming or going, as sitting or sleeping, this man understands not the secret of the system which I declare. For why?

That which is Tathágata has no where whence to come, and no where whither he can go, and is therefore named "Tathágata."

Cap. XXX.—The characteristic of the "One Harmonious Principle."

Subhúti, if a disciple, male or female, were to divide as many great chiliocosms as there are into small particles of dust, do you think that the whole mass of these particles would be numerous or not? Subhúti replied: Very numerous, world-honoured one! but yet if all these particles were such in reality, Buddha would not then have spoken of them in words. What then, if Buddha speaks of all these particles, then they are not really what they are called, it is but a mere name, world-honoured one! Tathágata speaks of the great chiliocosm, but this is nothing real—the term great chiliocosm is but a mere name. What then? if this universe be really something substantial, then it is but the *characteristic*¹ of the "one great harmonious principle."² But Tathágata declares that this also is something unreal—it is only an empty name.

Subhúti, this characteristic of the one "harmonious principle," is a thing which cannot be spoken of in words; it is only the vain philosophy of the world, which has grasped the idea of explaining this.

Cap. XXXI.—Thus there will be no more any acquired knowledge.

Subhúti, if a man say that Buddha declares that there is any such thing as a distinct knowledge of either of the four characteristics before named, do you think that this man properly explains the system I have now expounded?

No, world-honoured one! such a man would not properly explain this system, because Buddha declares that the knowledge of these characteristics is a knowledge of that which is not really existing, and therefore it is impossible.

Subhúti, the persons who aspire to the perfectly enlightened

¹ *Lakṣhaṇa.*

² That is, the one principle or essence which includes all else

heart, ought to know accordingly that this is true with respect to all things, and thus prevent the exhibition of any characteristics on any point whatever.

Subhúti, these very characteristics of which we speak are after all no characteristics, but a mere name.

Cap. XXXII.—Every appearance is in fact unreal and false.

Subhúti, if there were a man who kept for charity enough of the seven precious substances to fill innumerable asankyas of worlds, and if there was a disciple, male or female, who aspired after the perfectly enlightened heart, and adopted this Sūtra and arrived to (the observance of) the four canons, and carefully recited the various passages of the work and proclaimed them generally for the advantage of men, the happiness of this man would far exceed that of the other. And in what way can the disciple "proclaim them generally?" simply by relying on no conditions or distinctions whatever; thus he will act without agitation or excitement. Wherefore the conclusion is this—

That all things which admit of definition are as a dream, a phantom, a bubble, a shadow, as the dew and lightning flash. They ought to be regarded thus.

Buddha having uttered this Sūtra, the venerable Subhúti, and all the Bhikshus and Bhikshunís, the lay-disciples, male and female, and all the devas and asuras, hearing the words thus spoken, were filled with joy, and believing they accepted them and departed.
